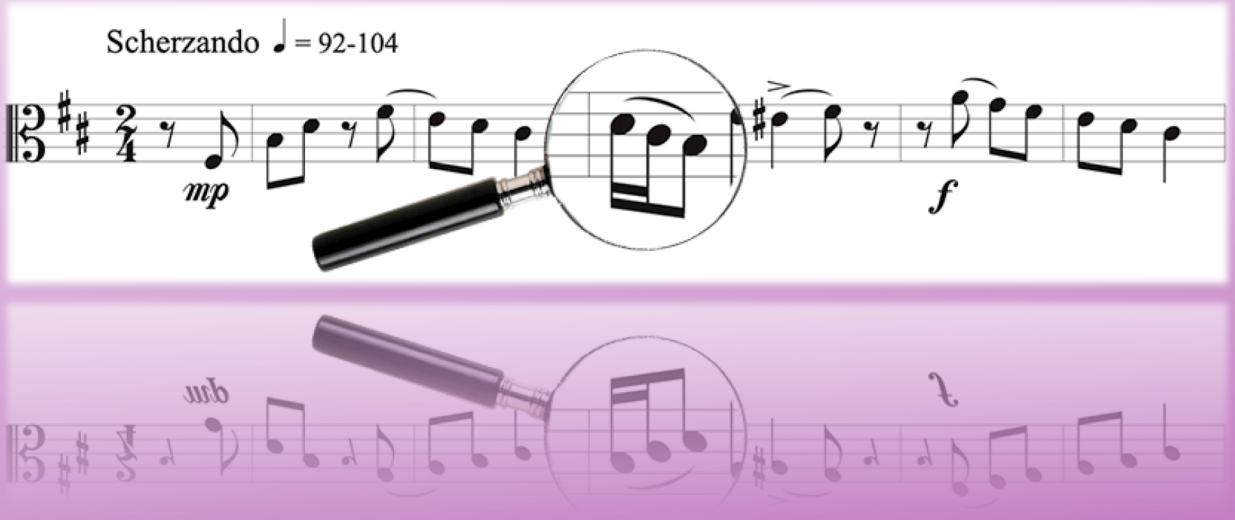
Brad Edwards

Free sample pages from:

100 Sight-Reading Melodies in Alto Clef

(Sight Reading Power Series)



horn bone press

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100 Sight-Reading Melodies in Alto Clef

(Sight-Reading Power Series)

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Introduction

One of my first published books (and as of now, the oldest one still available) is Introductory Studies in Tenor and Alto Clef, "Before Blazhevich" available through Ensemble Publications (commonly sold through Hickeys Music). This book is also available through my website,

This new pdf book is meant to compliment that physical book. When writing that book, beyond the earliest etudes, I began to intentionally throw in unexpected intervals, forcing the reader to actually *read* as opposed to relying on known patterns. As a result, my expectation was that most students would need a week or so to prepare those etudes.

These melodies are different. For the most part they are more predictable, written with the expectation that students will use their knowledge of scales, arpeggios and repeating patterns to help them navigate these tunes. My hope is that the two books can complement each other: students prepare an etude over the course of a week and also do some sight-reading in the lesson. That said, don't expect a specific mapping between the two books. They both follow a similar trendline but one specific set of sight-reading melodies isn't meant to correspond with one or two specific etudes.

The layout of this pdf book is intended for screens, not paper. Thus you'll find more white space on each page. I suppose you could print out this book but that would waste a lot of paper!

How to Use this Book

Instead of practicing the melodies, read them once or twice and then move on. You can come back to them later and they will still serve as sight-reading material. On your first pass, you might try reading them at the slower tempo. On the second pass, read them at the faster tempo.

A Note About the Tempo Marks:

Each melody has both a descriptive tempo term (*Andante, Allegro, etc*) and two numbers indicating tempo. The higher number is the speed that sounds right to me for that melody. The lower number is three old-fashioned clicks down on the metronome. I say "old-fashioned" because, once upon a time, metronome markings went up or down by increments greater than one. Typical "old-fashioned" metronome markings included:

60 - 63 - 66 - 69 - 72 - 76 - 80 - 84 - 88 - 92 - 96 - 100

Tips for Sight-Reading

Keep Steady Time

Of course you want to play the right notes and rhythms when you are sight-reading. Steady time is also important! Imagine you are playing with an ensemble and you hesitate. They aren't going to stop and wait for you. We all stumble when sight-reading; that's natural. The key is this: ***keep the beat going and get back on track as quickly as you can.***

"Pre-Play" the music in your mind

Some people prefer the term "audiate." For me, "pre-play" is more descriptive. In other words, look it over and play it in your mind. When you pick up your instrument, it can effectively be your second time through the piece!

Here's a three-step process I like to use to develop "pre-play" skills:

1. Study it for 10 seconds, then look away and answer these questions (think of them as the "vital signs" of the music):
    a. What's the key signature? Based on that, what notes are you most likely to miss (hint: it's probably the last sharp or flat in the key signature!)
    b. What's the time signature?
    c. What's the tempo?
    d. What's the dynamic at the opening?

2. Study it for another 10 seconds, then look away and answer these questions:
    a. Where are the tricky moments with accidentals?
    b. Where are the tricky moments with rhythm?
    c. What are the highest and lowest notes?

3. Study it for a final 10 seconds, then look away and **see how much of the opening you can play from memory**.

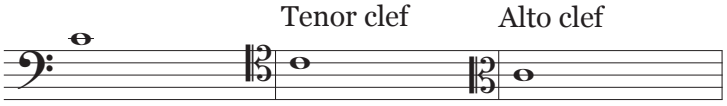
    Yes, you heard me right. Actually do a flash-memorization of the opening.

    But why? When scanning sight-reading before playing it, some people let the notes float in front of their eyes but don't actually imagine themselves playing it. That's why I like the term "pre-play." Actually ***perform*** the music in your mind: both sound (aural) ***and*** sensation (kinesthetic).

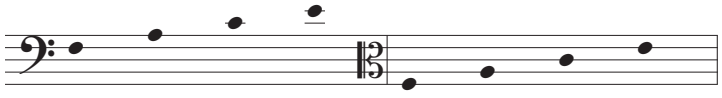
Introducing the Alto Clef

Besides using this 𝄞 and this 𝄢, composers sometimes use a movable C clef, 𝄡. Wherever that symbol is placed, the line passing through it is middle C. Different placements change the clef's name.

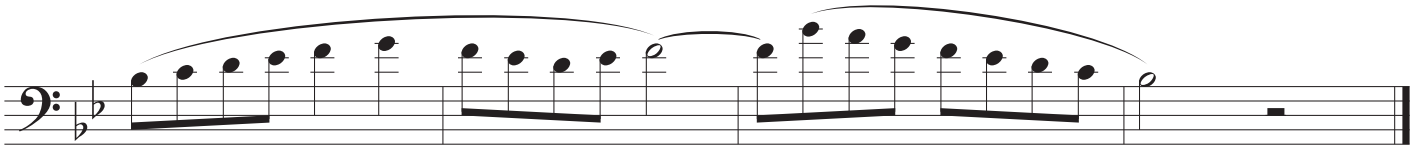
All three of these notes are the same: middle C.



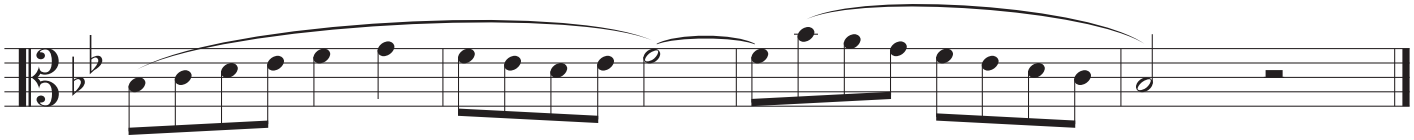
Each measure sounds the same: F, A, C, E.



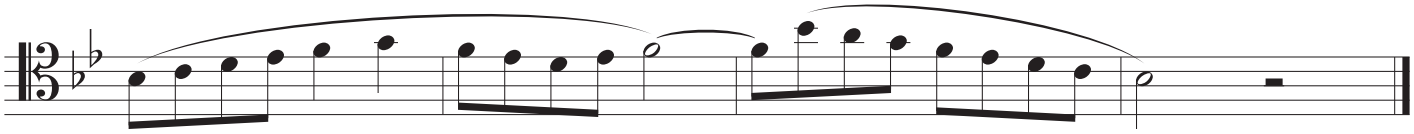
Why would they do such a thing?
Mostly to get rid of ledger lines. You may be used to reading this:



But, in alto clef, you don't have to deal with so many ledger lines:



Notice the alto clef is close to (and frequently confused with) tenor clef.
Here's that same passage in tenor clef.

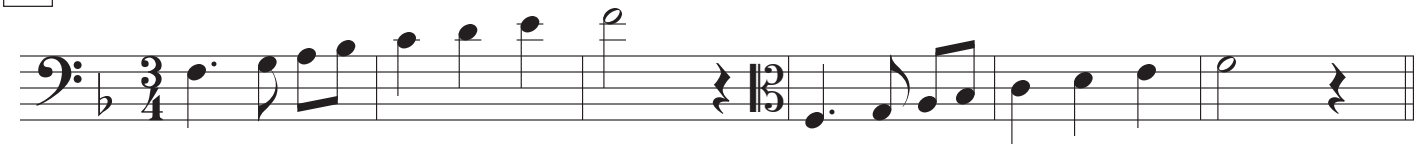


I have written another pdf book: *100 Sight-Reading Melodies in Tenor Clef* to assist students with developing that reading skill. It should also be available from the TromboneZone.org or HornbonePress.com websites.

Stepwise melodies

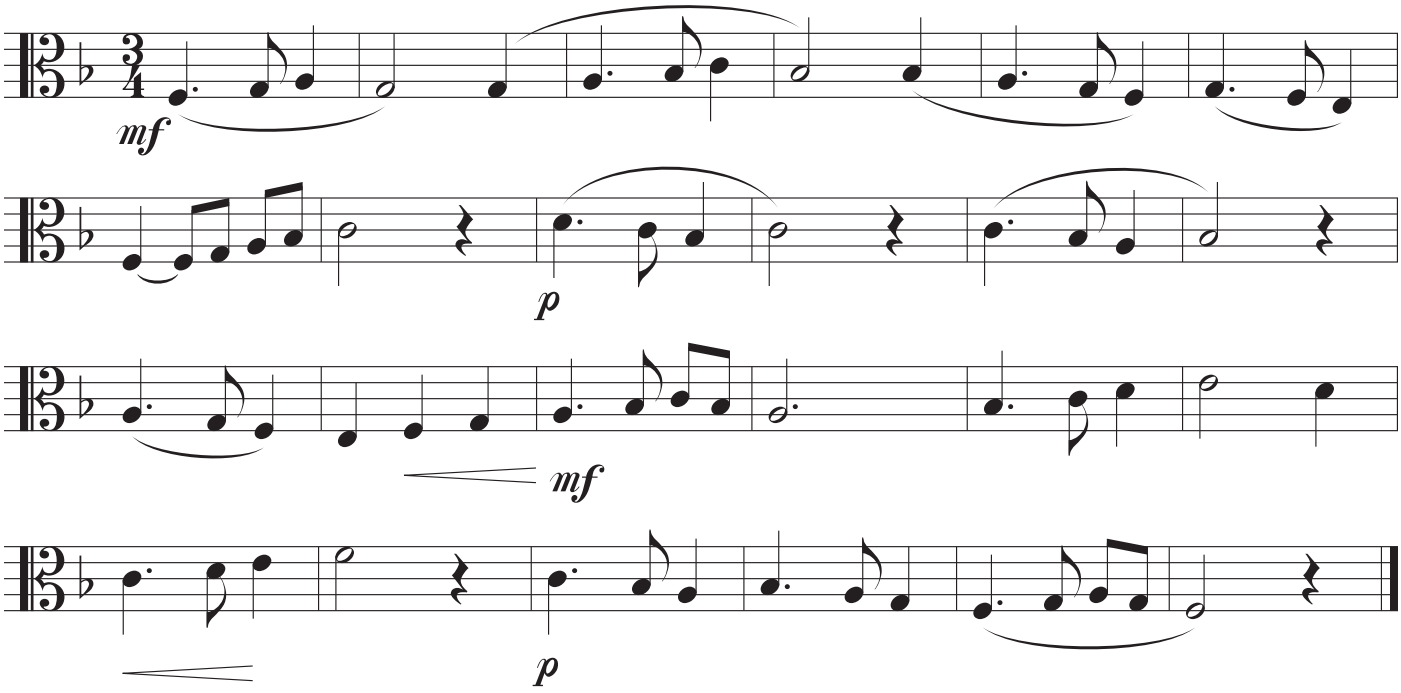
1

Preparation



Melody

Allegro ♩ = 112-126



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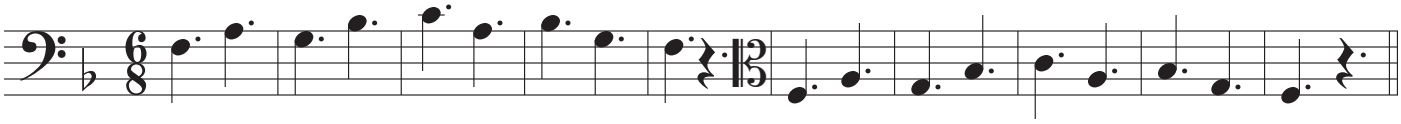
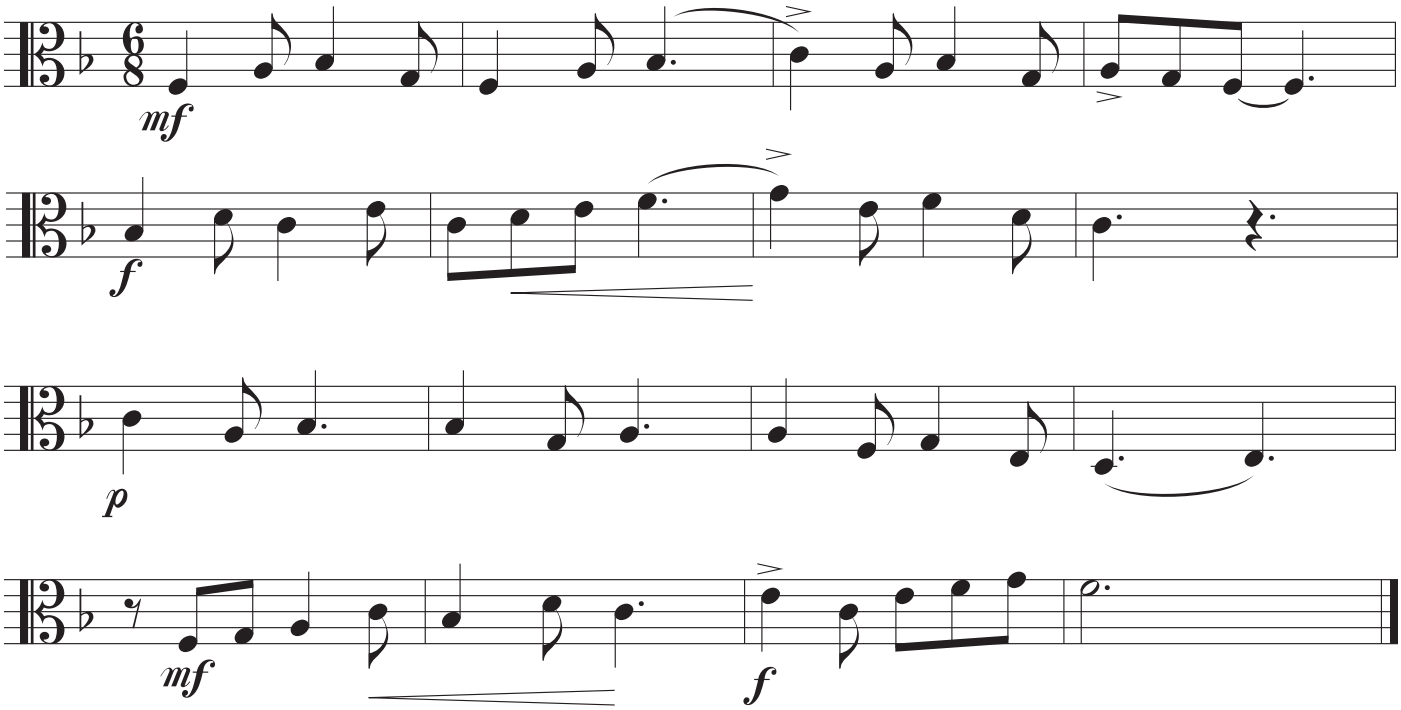
Introducing thirds

Preparation



Melody

Jig ♩. = 96-108



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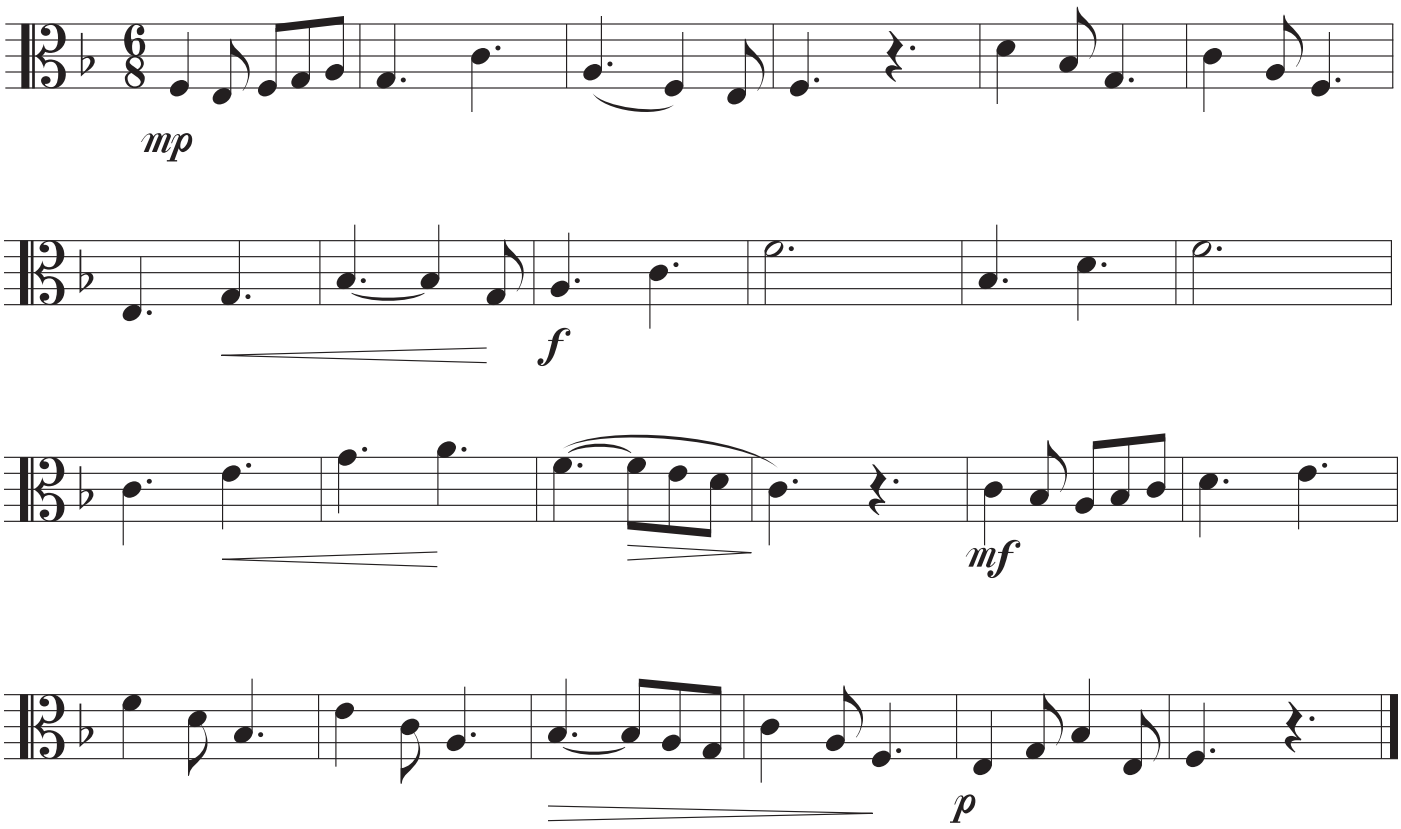
Introducing triads

17 Allegretto ♩. = 80-92



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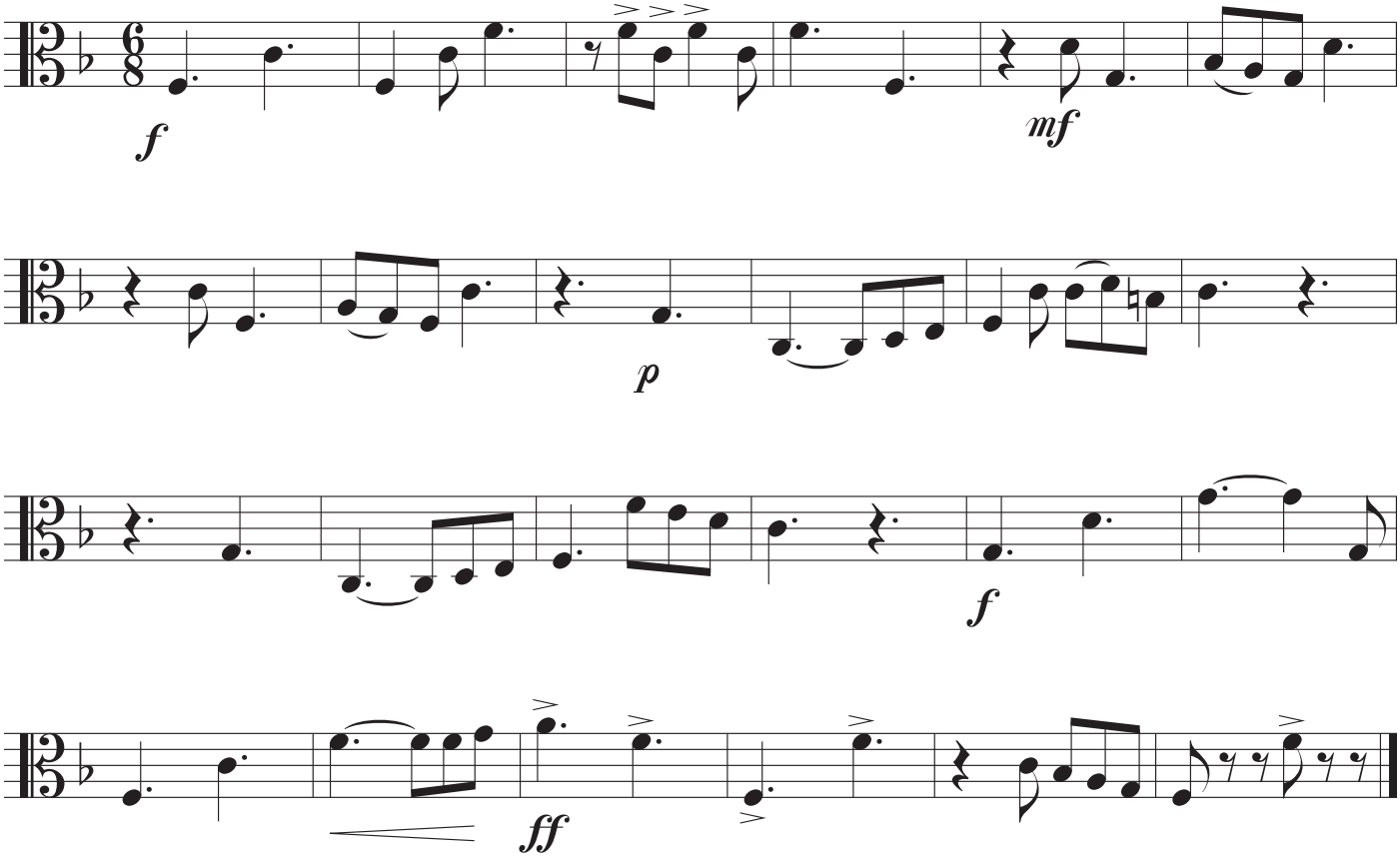
Fifths and Octaves

24 March ♩. = 96-108



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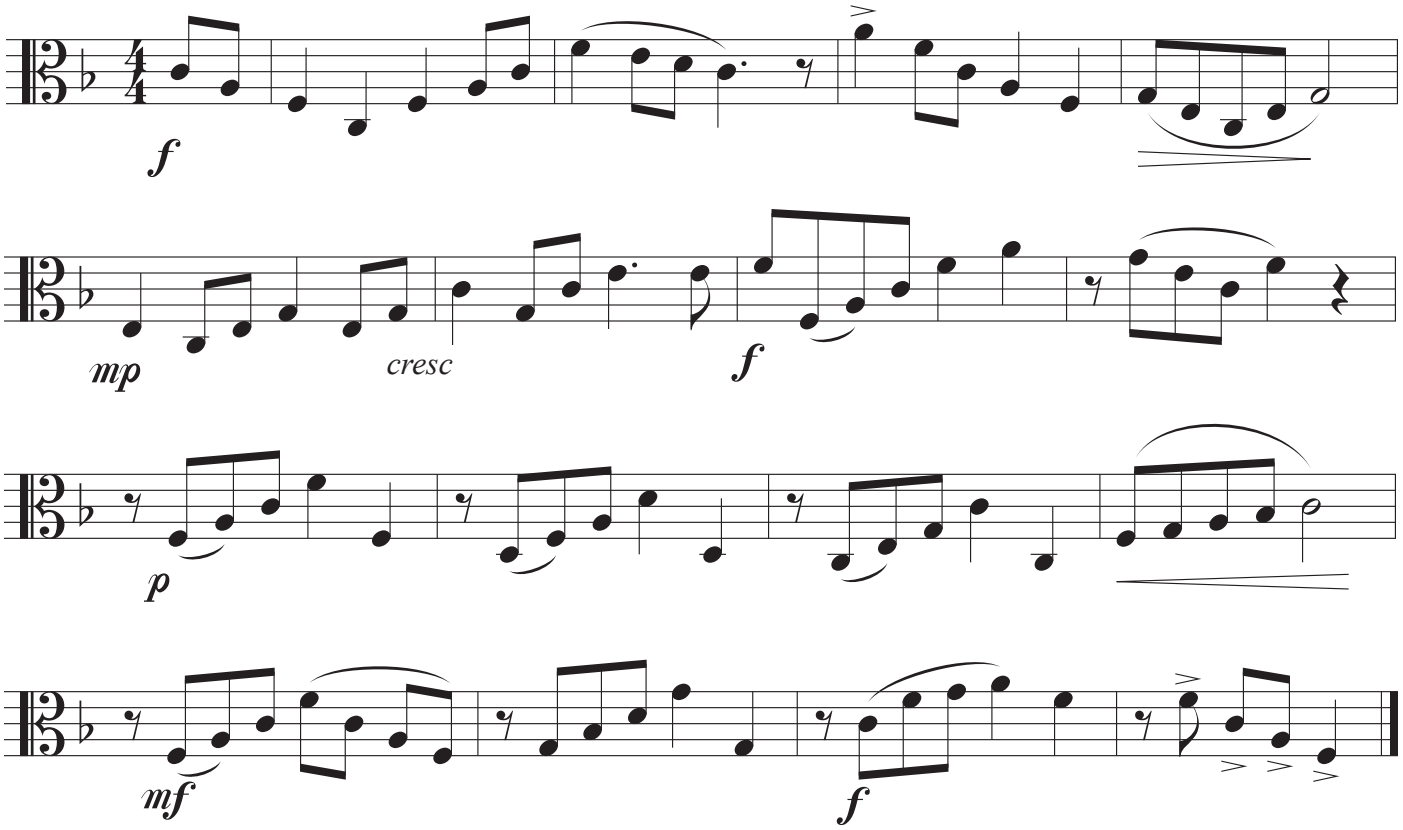
One-octave arpeggios

31 Moderato ♩ = 96-108



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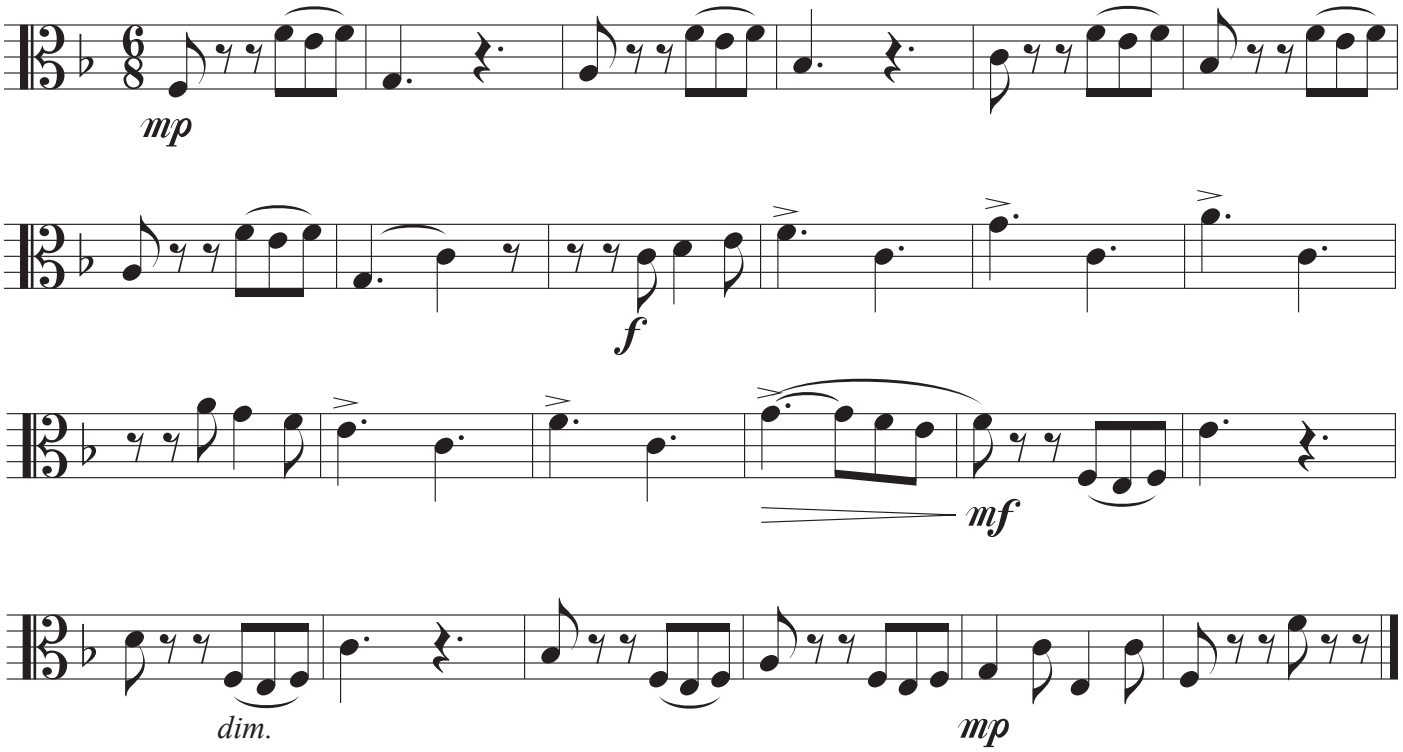
Pivot Points

38 March ♩.= 92-104



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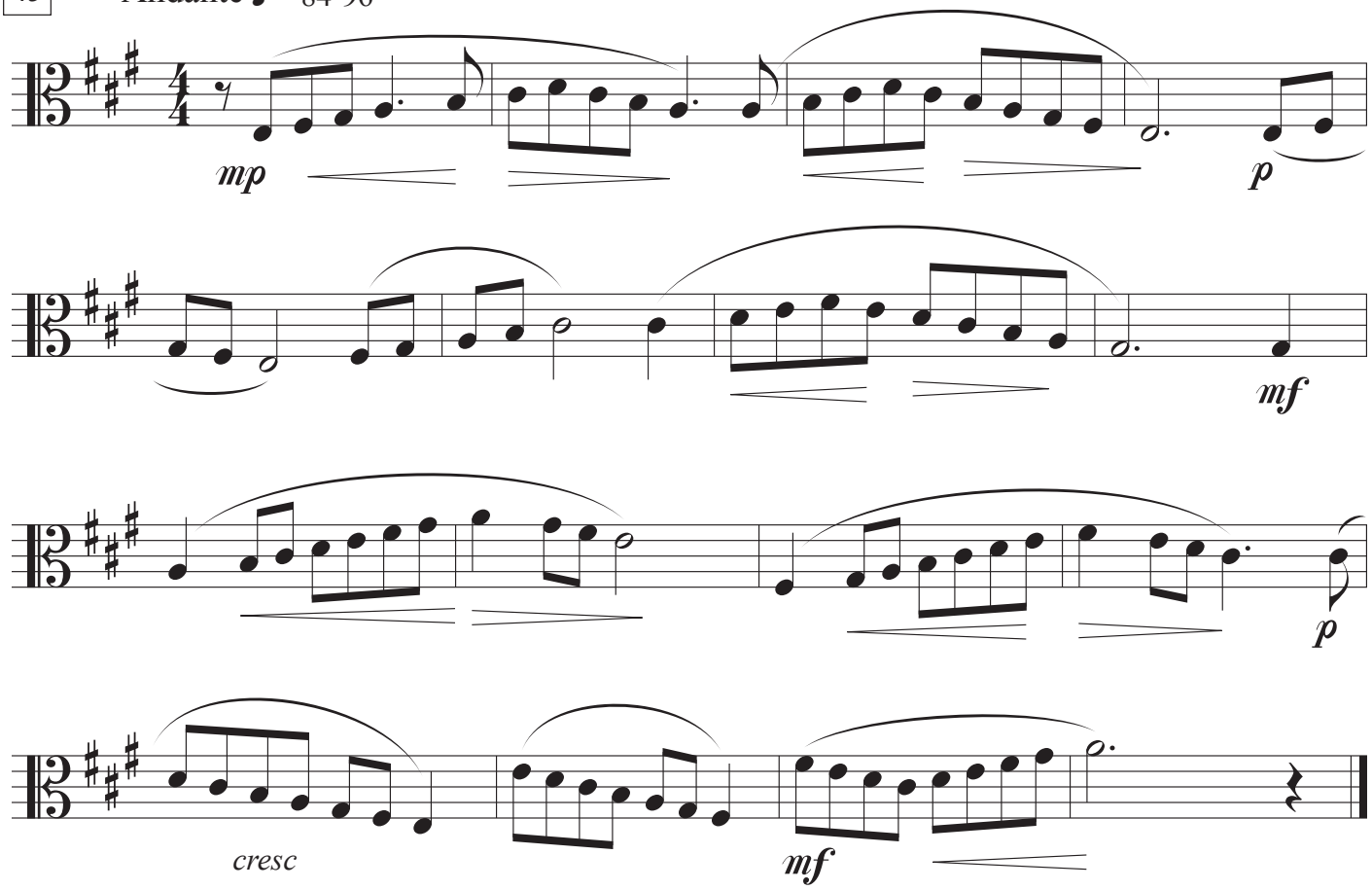
More sharps and flats (stepwise motion)

45 Andante ♩ = 84-96



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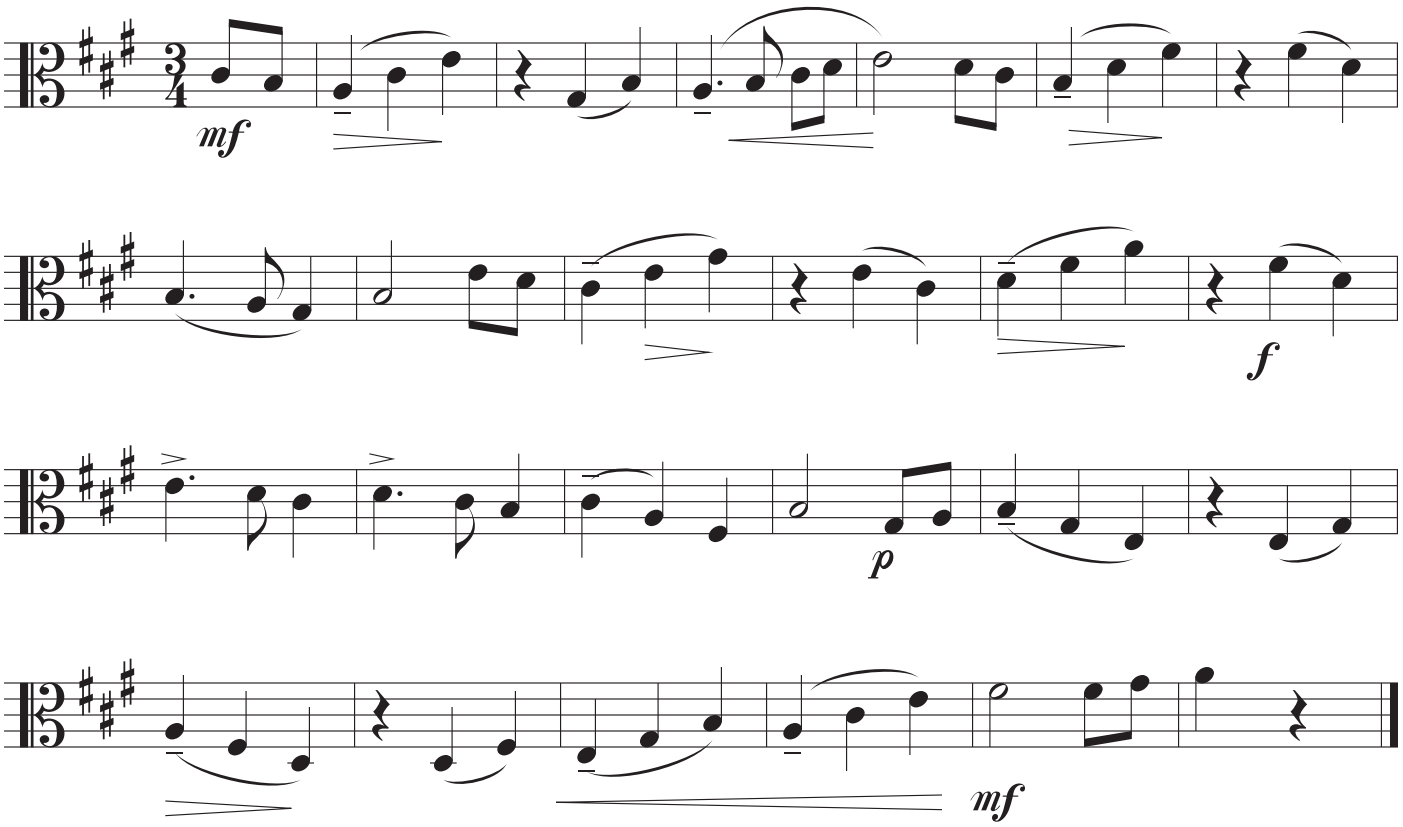
More sharps and flats (triads)

53

Waltz ♩. = 56-63



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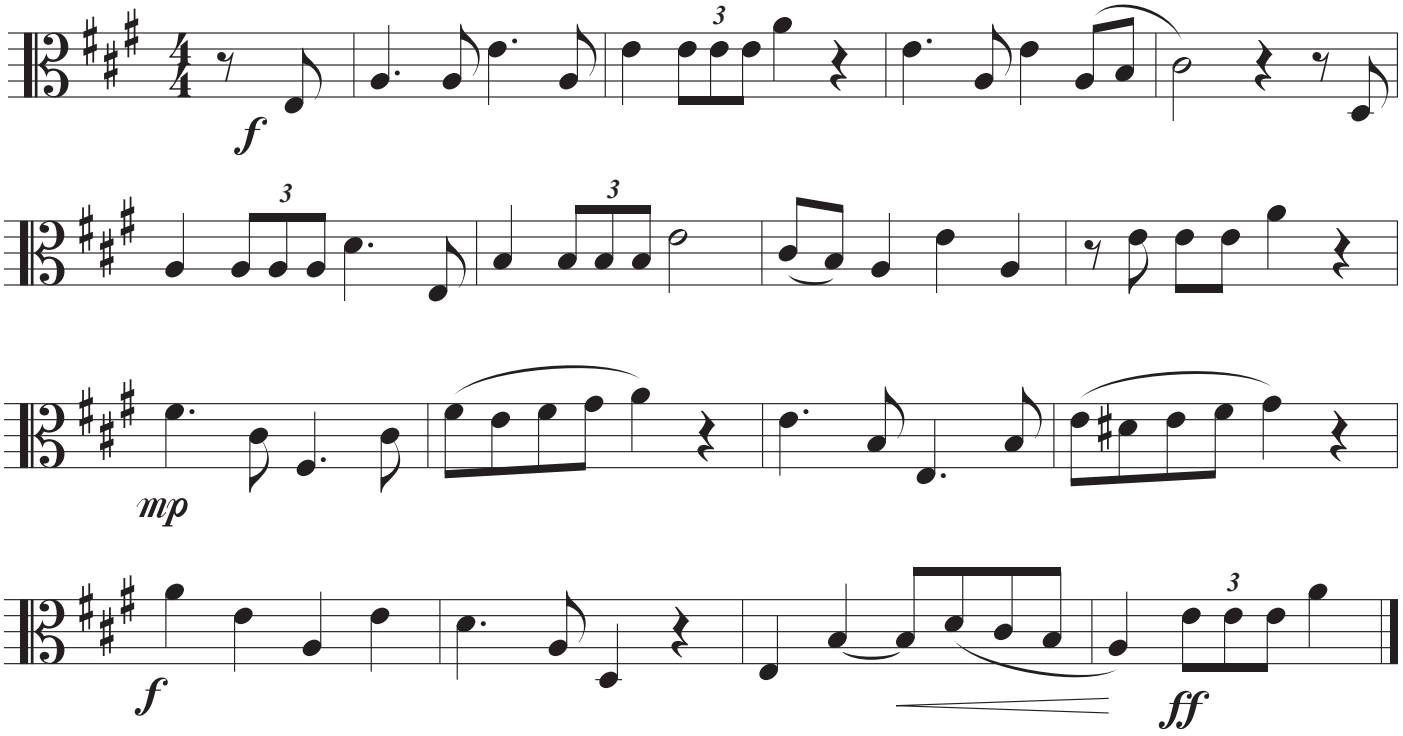
More sharps and flats (fifths and octaves)

57

Fanfare ♩= 108-120



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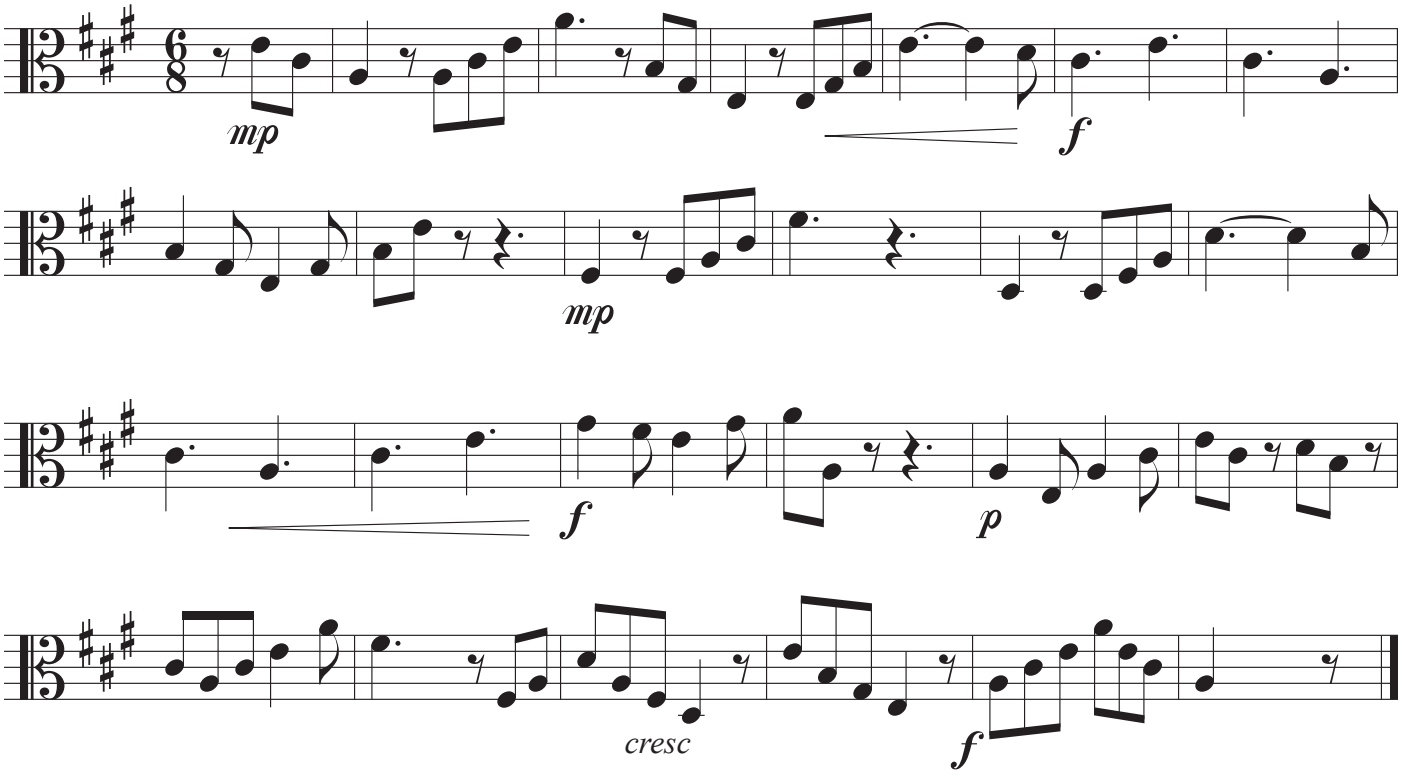
More sharps and flats (one-octave arpeggios)

61

Allegretto ♩. = 100-112



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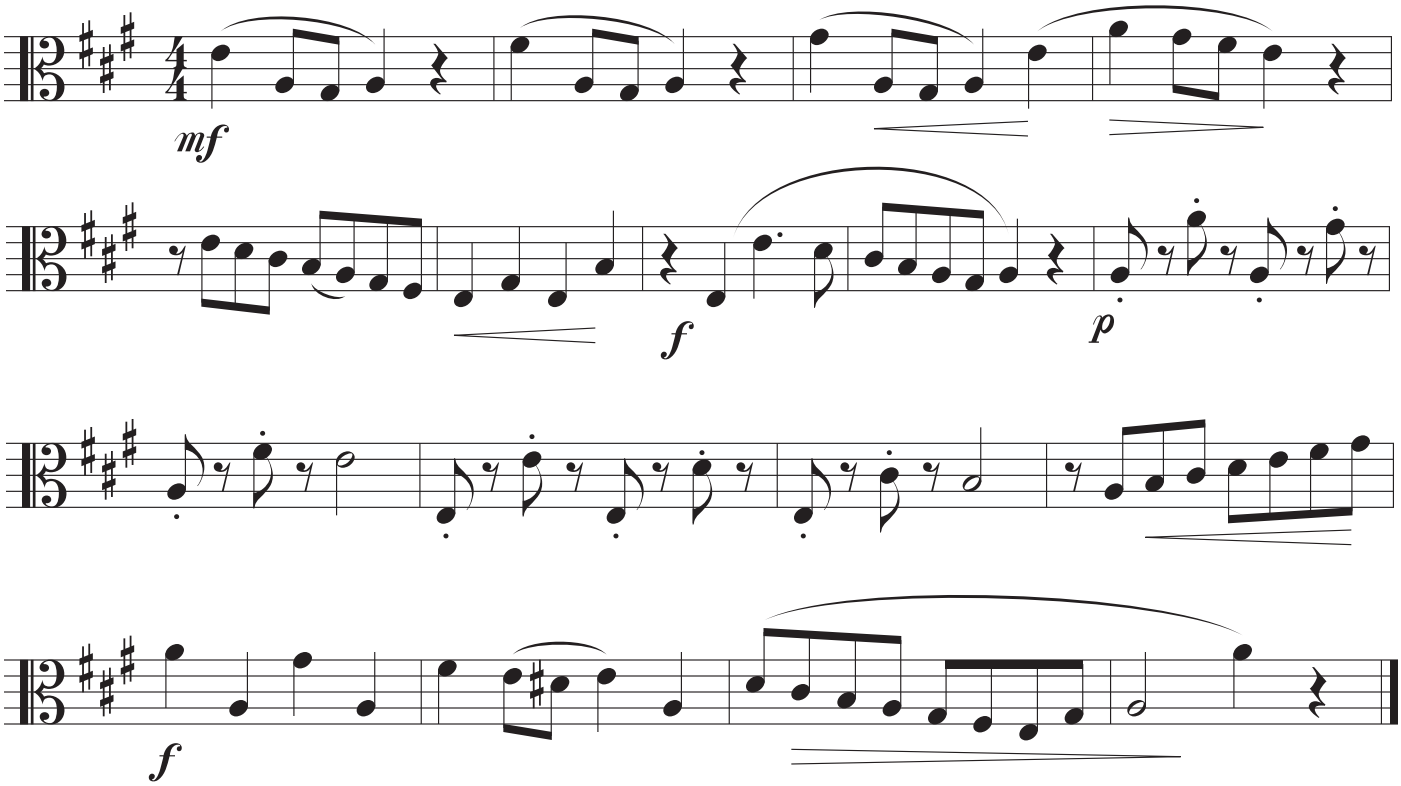
More sharps and flats (pivot points)

65 Moderato ♩ = 100-112



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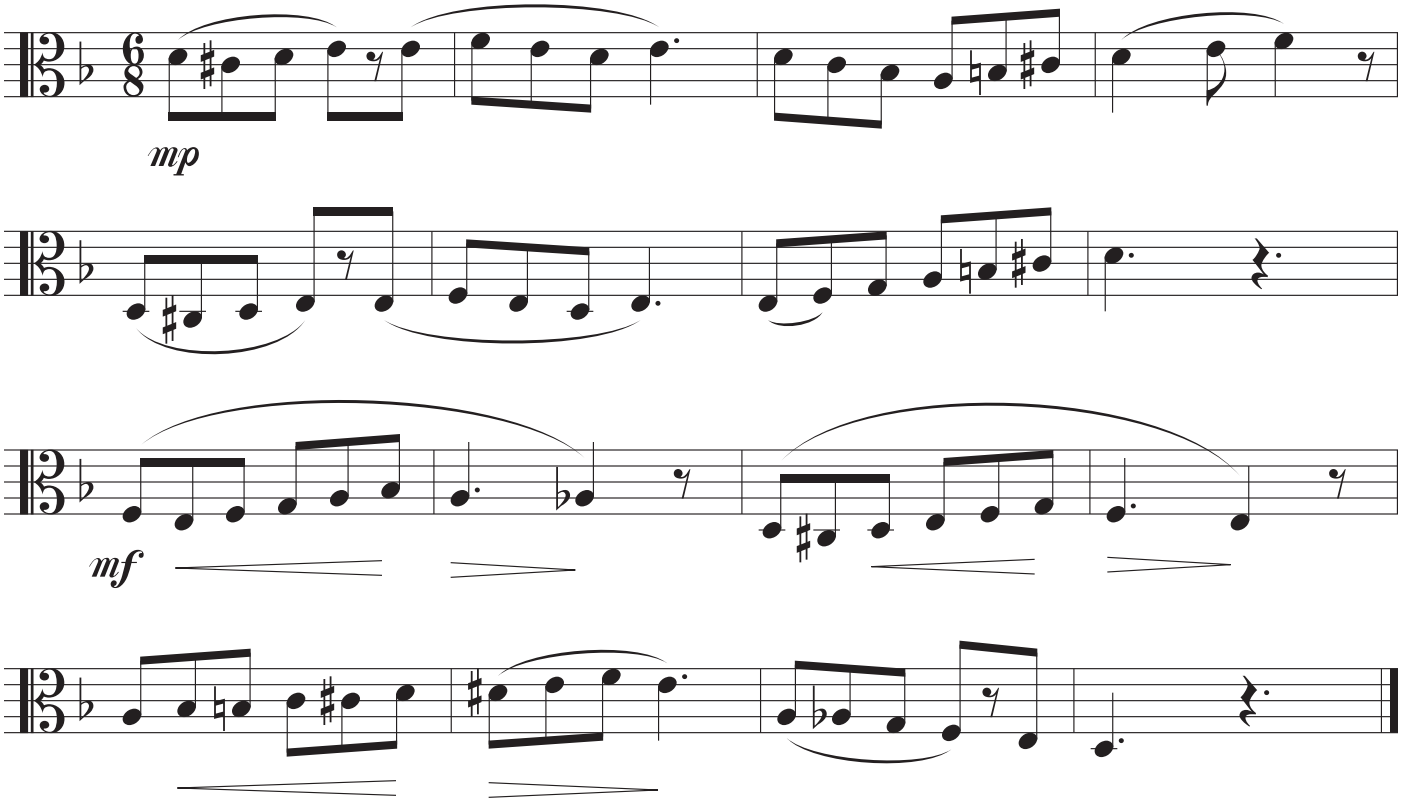
Minor Keys and Accidentals (stepwise)

69 Allegretto ♩. = 84-96



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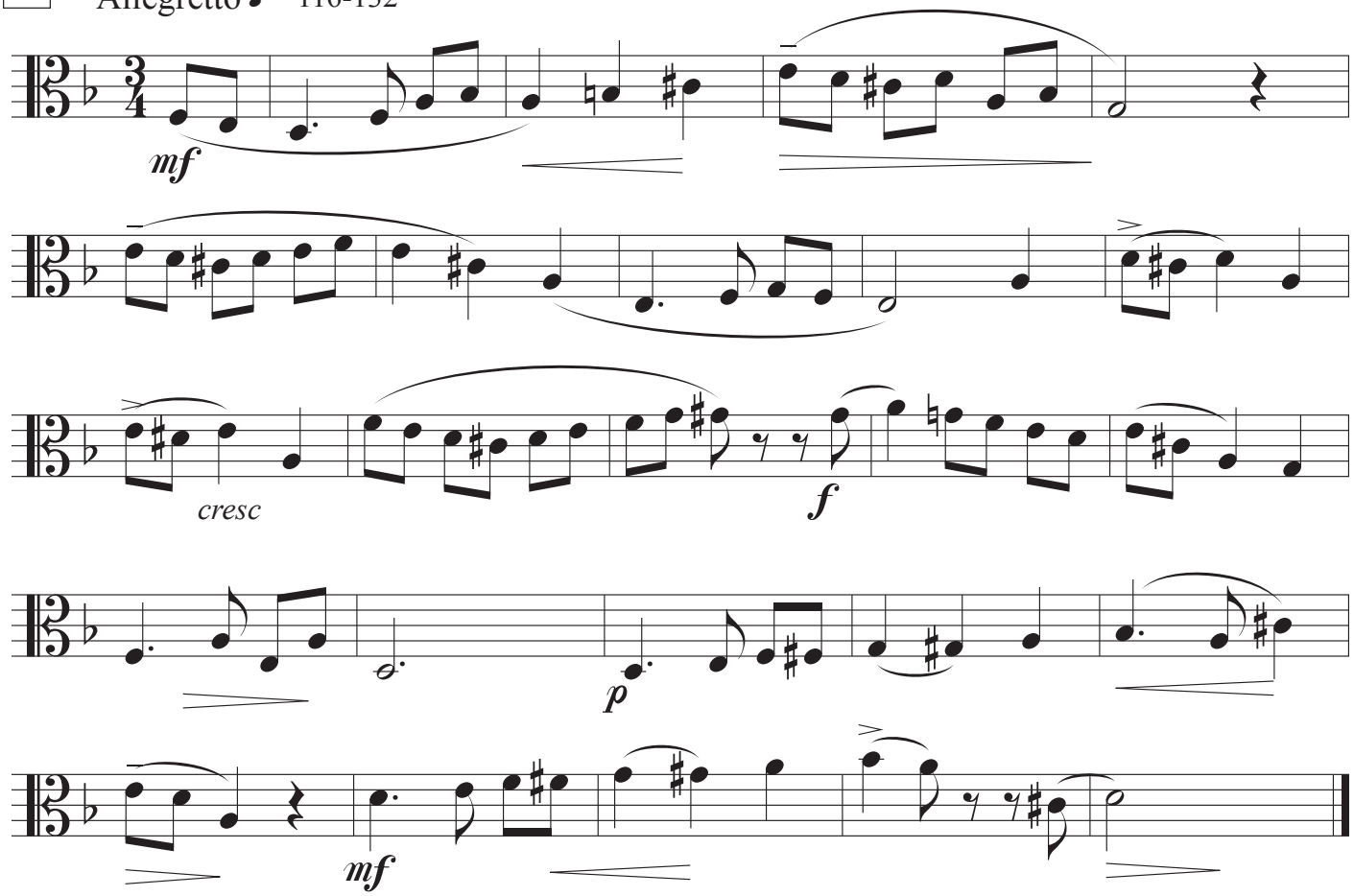
Minor keys and accidentals (more leaps)

76

Allegretto ♩ = 116-132



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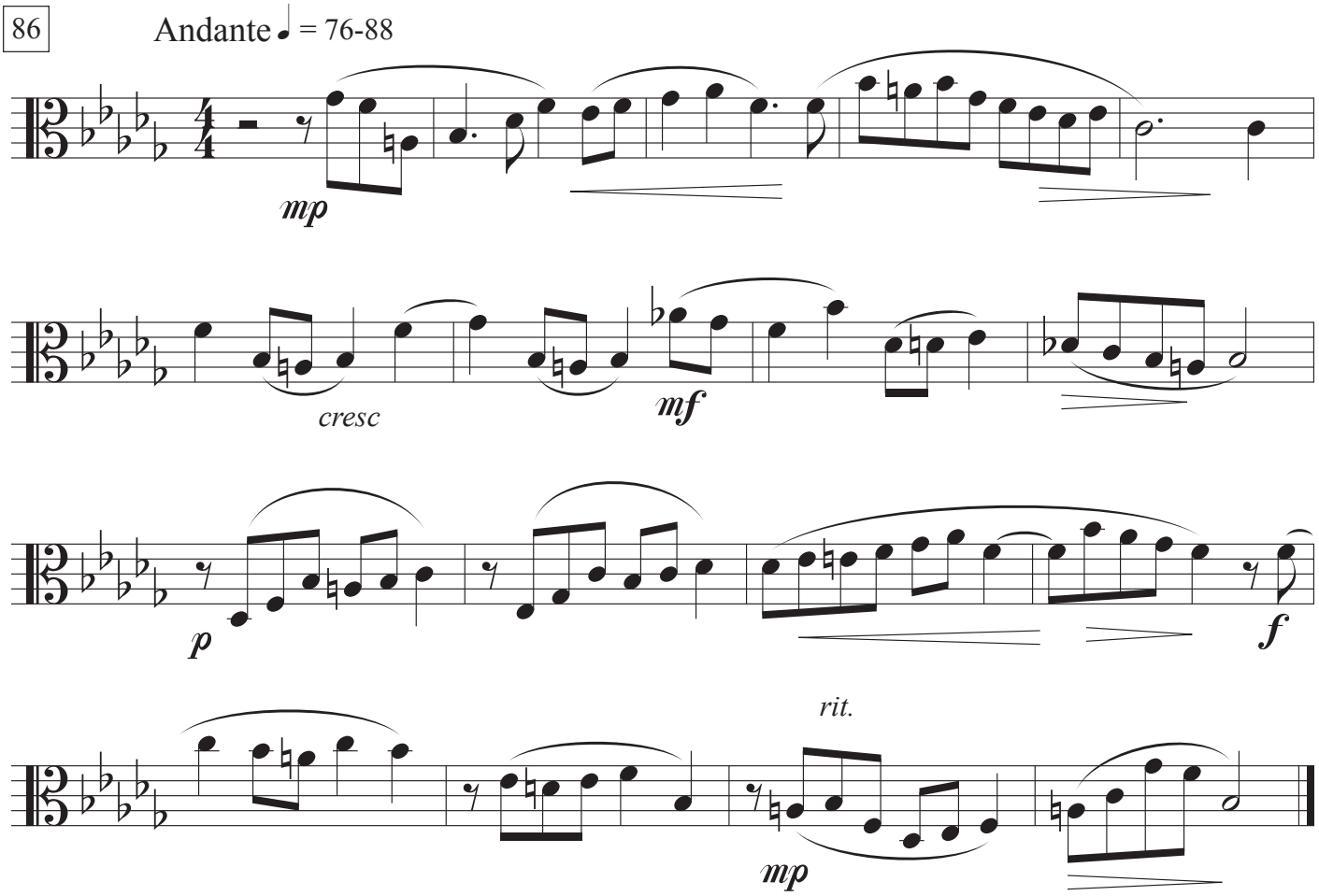

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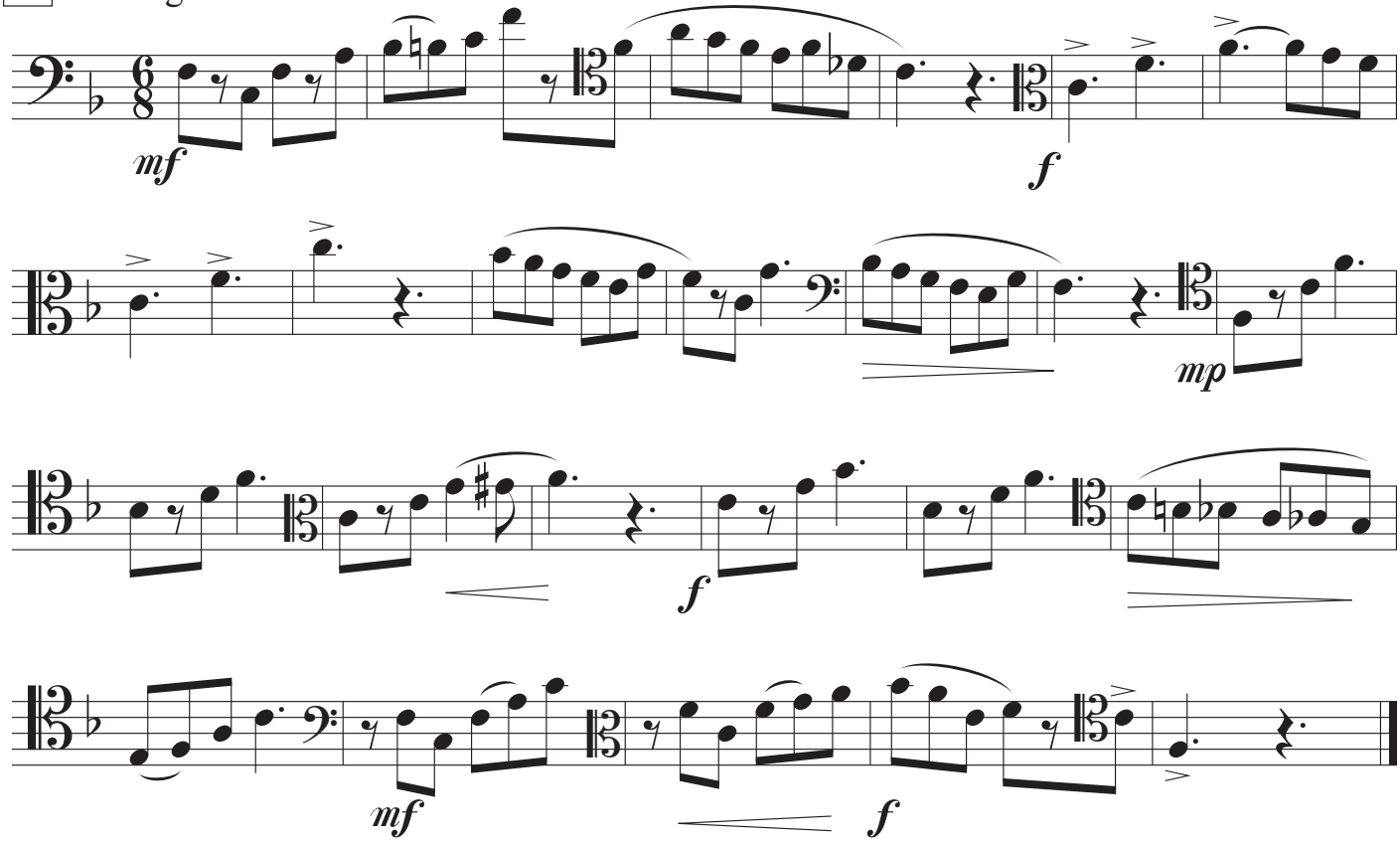
Changing clefs (bass, tenor, alto)

89

Jig ♩.= 92-104



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